

VIDEO GAMES FOR INFORMAL ENGLISH LEARNING: INDONESIAN STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: The objective of this research was to examine the viewpoints of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners on the influence of video game playing on their English language proficiency, particularly in a non-conventional learning setting without of teacher supervision. The study used a narrative inquiry methodology to investigate participants' perspectives on the influence of video games on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) acquisition. The study started by conducting comprehensive interviews with two people who met particular criteria relevant to the issue. The data obtained from the interviews were then analyzed using Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis approach. The qualitative results emphasized the beneficial effects of video games on the acquisition of vocabulary, motivation, and mastery of English language abilities. This study demonstrates that video games may serve as an option for informal English language acquisition, offering useful perspectives for educators and future investigations.

Keywords: video games, EFL student, English.

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a communication system. Regional dialects, official national languages, and internationally spoken languages are only a few examples of the many components that make up language. Rabiah (2018) states that daily communication between individuals and groups reflects the relationship between communication and culture. Our language is shaped by our location and ethnicity.

English is an international language we use to communicate. Many nations use English as their language. The majority of people use English to communicate with people from other countries, making it an international language. Globalization caused the English as International Language (EIL) paradigm, according to Dewi (2012). Globalization trade, immigration, and colonization affects English as an international language.

English language learning includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Sadiku (2015), learning a language will improve your academic performance and benefit you as an adult. The four skills are linked and not separate. They form a cyclical chain that collapses if one link breaks. In the fast-paced, competitive global economy, your language skills, especially in English, can change your life. Students should excel in these language skills.

Everyone learns differently. Sahriyah et al. (2021) define "learning style" as how students effortlessly and engagingly absorb knowledge. Everybody learns differently based on their comfort and familiarity with that method. Intellectual curiosity is often influenced by personal interests. Fariyah and Umamah (2021) found that students without English learning ambition

struggle. This statement aligns with the objective of the research, which aims to examine the utilization of video games as a tool for English language acquisition.

In today's technological age, a large number of people, including children and adults, enjoy playing video games, particularly those available online. Entertainment and stress relief are their reasons for playing video games. It is clear that certain gamers are proficient in English. Shliakhovchuk et al. (2020) studied Generation Z, born in the early 1990s and early 2000s. Male participants were 69% gamers, 20% non-gamers, and 11% game instructors. Female respondents were 52% gamers, 40% non-gamers, and 8% game gurus. This study shows a significant gender gap, with only 24% of respondents were female.

There are various opinions about video games. For example, a lot of parents think that their kids' academic performance can suffer because of video games. In a previous research, Kutner et al. (2008) similarly investigated the impact of violent video games on society. However, previous research by Granic et al. (2014) found several benefits, such as social, emotional, and motivational benefits. As was previously said, video games provide several benefits for English language learners. Every person learns and masters a language in a different way, and playing video games might be one useful strategy.

Developers used English as the primary language to guarantee worldwide accessibility. The game has a narrative and chat that allows players to learn new words. Furthermore, the internet allows us to engage in online gaming. These games work on a global basis, allowing us to interact with people from other nations. This engagement provides a fantastic platform for improving our English language skills, particularly in oral communication. In addition to their enjoyment value, video games can contribute to the academic development of adolescents by enhancing their knowledge in specific areas like as Mathematics, English, Science, and others (Corbett et al., 2021)

The study examines participants' views on informal learning with video games and English language acquisition. The researchers want to understand how learners use video games for language acquisition and how instructors can use them in the future. Previous research has shown that video games help language learning. However, Winaldo and Oktaviani (2022) found that video games lack the resources to teach English. This research aims to contribute to the existing discourse on the topic and highlight the pros and cons of using video games for English language acquisition.

METHODS

This study employed a narrative research methodology to examine the relationship between the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students regarding the use of video games in their acquisition of the English language. Additionally, it aimed to explore students' views on the effectiveness and utility of video games in informal English language learning. The research design was derived from Creswell (2012) work. The study commenced by conducting comprehensive interviews with the participants, which were subsequently followed by an analytical phase to systematically analyze the interview data and identify appropriate data.

Profile of Participants		
Participant	Participant 1	Participant 2
Age	22	24
University	Public University in Surabaya	Private University in Malang
Department	Materials and Metallurgical Engineering	English Education Department
Profile	Bachelor's degree graduate Playing video games for 16 years Has a TOEFL ITP score of 593. Taken English course for 5 years	Undergraduate Playing video games for 11 years Has a TEP score of 527 Attended English camp a few times

The study was conducted with two male participants with an educational background, one from the Material Engineering and Metallurgy (participant 1) and the other from department of English Language Education (participant 2). All participants were EFL learners, had a fairly good level of English fluency, and were active as gamers, making them suitable for providing relevant experiences for this study.

The data collected came from in-depth interviews conducted using Zoom meetings and Whatsapp voice notes. This interview was conducted in English to facilitate an interview with one of the participants who came from abroad.

The data collection procedure involved explaining an overview of the study to participants, focusing on their experience with using video games on English acupuncture. The researchers used a series of 9 questions during interviews, which covered topics such as the use of video games, the video game genres they played, their opinions about learning English with video games and also video game effects on their English. In addition, the researchers compiled their TOEFL and TEP scores to compare their self-assessment with clear evidence.

The process of data analysis follows to the six stages of thematic analysis as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process involves getting acquainted with the data, creating preliminary codes, conducting a search for themes, evaluating the identified themes, establishing and labeling the themes, and ultimately generating the report. The researcher transcribed the interviews word for word and thoroughly examined the transcripts to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' narratives.

To ensure study credibility and triangulation, multiple methods will be used. Because study participants must meet certain requirements, the author couldn't generalize them when collecting data. Thus, only two individuals who met qualifications participated in the study. The author conducted at least two in-depth interviews to address this issue. The goal was to validate participant responses. Participants examined the interview transcripts and subjects to provide input and improve. To maintain study ethics, the two participants gave their consent before the interviews.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

The study examined the experience of EFL students using video games as a tool for informal learning. Both participants were interviewed about the use of their video games and how it affected their language learning. Participants first played video games about 11-16 years ago,

The study revealed that video games had an impact on the participants' acquisition of the English language. The impact of video games on the English language abilities of EFL students

can be categorized into three distinct outcomes: acquisition of vocabulary, motivation, and proficiency in the English language.

Vocabulary Acquisition

The participants voiced concerns about the impact of video games on EFL learning, however one of the key advantages that emerged was the development of vocabulary. Participant 1 explained how he learned English by using video games. He believes that reading is essential in nearly all games to understand the rules and goals of the game. He was compelled to research it in order to understand it, which naturally aided him in acquiring unfamiliar vocabulary and sentences. Moreover, with the utilization of English-language media, he felt obligated to partake in it, so enhancing his language proficiency even more.

Our findings are in line with several previous studies, such as the research conducted by Rafidiyah et al. (2019), which revealed that video games have a beneficial effect on the acquisition of English vocabulary among students learning English as a foreign language. A study conducted by Fadillah et al. (2023) found that the frequency of word occurrence and exposure to diverse situations in video games significantly influence the outcomes of vocabulary acquisition.

Holifah and Kurniasih (2021) say strategies can improve learning and achieve goals. As part of this research, we observe how participants learn English through video games. He must understand game objectives to finish. As most video games are in English, he must know the meanings of unfamiliar words. He can find word definitions online or in an English dictionary to play the game smoothly. This is one of his vocabulary-building methods.

Video games can teach, as mentioned. Umamah and Saukah (2022) examined student and teacher views on Digital Game-Based Learning. Perceptions vary by gender and interest, according to this study. The study collected data using mixed methods. In particular, 86 respondents completed an open-ended questionnaire on gamification acceptance for the quantitative analysis. Four English students and four teachers were interviewed in-depth to determine their level of agreement or disagreement with Digital Game-Based Learning. This study found that EFL students and teachers agree that digital game-based learning (DGBL) improves cognitive and affective skills. Video games may have a bright future in education.

Motivation Boost

Video games for informal English learning also offer the advantage of fostering motivation. Participant 1 stated that the use of video games into English educational resources can enhance the enjoyment of studying. Utilizing video games can be an effective measure to enhance kids' motivation to learn. Participant 2 agreed with the notion that a significant proportion of video games are in the English language, so playing them will undeniably improve one's English skill. He has the belief that the process of acquiring knowledge through video games may be extremely pleasurable and mentally engaging, especially for persons who possess a strong enthusiasm for gaming.

In another study, Umamah (2023) found that Mobile Games-Based Learning (MGBL) can motivate students. Similar to this study, a participant said using video games as a learning tool motivates gamers by incorporating their interests.

Anderson et al (2008) examined video games in EFL classes. The U.S. Army video game involved eight players. Three Taiwanese students (one male and two female), two French university exchange students, and four male high school students were in the group. The findings showed that many students had trouble understanding the virtual characters' directions due to their

fast speech and unfamiliarity with military English. Most male participants loved the game, while all female participants disliked FPS games. One participant in our study thought video games in the classroom would be fun and educational. People who don't like video games may not benefit.

English Proficiency Skills

Proficiency in the English language is crucial for language acquisition. In this section, participants will discuss their experiences in developing the four language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing.

Participant 1 reported that while engaging in video games, particularly action or RPG games, he encounters numerous unfamiliar words, which have the potential to enhance his reading abilities. Participant 2 contended that the abundance of English-language texts in video games can enhance a player's reading proficiency. This supports the findings of Pamkungkas and Arizah (2023) regarding the impact of video game usage on the reading skills of ESL readers. The study comprised a sample of 10 participants, all of whom held the belief that video games have the potential to enhance reading skills. Every participant provided distinct justifications for this. The results of our study suggest that most participants hold a shared belief: menus or instructions written in English can unintentionally improve users' reading skills.

Participant 1 observed that most narrative-driven video games employ English audio for the characters' conversation. He elucidated that video games can augment sense of hearing skills through the utilization of audio. Individuals experiencing auditory difficulties can confirm the game's content by consulting the available subtitles. Participant 2 shared the same belief about how video games can improve listening skills. In line with research by Jimmi et al. (2024), video games have been shown to improve English language proficiency, especially in the listening domain. This study suggests listening attentively to cutscenes, character dialogues, and focused listening during games with multiple endings, since game choices can affect outcomes. Our study found that participants highlighted the importance of attentive listening to solve game challenges.

Participant 1 expressed his perspective on the impact of video games on an individual's verbal communication abilities. From his viewpoint, the use of video games does not significantly enhance verbal communication skills, unless individuals engage in online competitive games like Counter Strike 2 and Dota 2, where effective communication with teammates is necessary. Participant 2 agreed, confirming that participating in live online gaming improved his verbal communication abilities. In alignment with the findings of Toufik and Hanane (2021). Research suggests that regular engagement in online games can enhance speaking skills. In their study, Toufik and Hanane (2021) discovered that the participants engaged in online gaming for a duration of 2 to 6 hours on weekdays, and 10 hours on weekends. Engaging with individuals primarily from Europe and North America inadvertently enhanced his verbal aptitude by exposing him to a wide range of accents, slang, and regional dialects. One of our participants observed that proficiency in verbal communication only enhances when engaging in online multiplayer games.

Participant 1 stated that his writing skills can be improved indirectly by being exposed to well-crafted sentences while playing video games. Participant 2, however, claimed that his writing skills did not significantly improve as a consequence of playing video games. In their study, Lisakwansu et al. (2012) investigated the impact of video games on writing skills. Participants' agreement on the vocabulary learning effects of video games was assessed using a four-point Likert scale. Upon analysis, it was found that 90 percent of individuals are in favor of enhancing their language abilities, with 37 percent expressing strong agreement and 53 percent expressing general agreement. Furthermore, our research revealed that engaging in video games did not

enhance writing skills. The limited impact of video games on writing skills can be attributed to the dearth of writing tasks within them. Consequently, it enhances users' repertoire of words for writing.

Most Improved English Language Skills Through Video Games

English proficiency is essential to language learning. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking improve more with informal video game learning. The first participant stated that video games improve reading and listening the most. In contrast, participant 2 said that video games improved reading and speaking the most. But he also mentioned how much playing video games improved listening and reading comprehension.

TOEFL and TEP Score		
Participants	Participant 1	Participant 2
Listening Comprehension	62	56
Structure and Written Expression	56	50
Reading Comprehension	60	52
Total Score	593	527

After examining the TOEFL and TEP statistics of each individual, it became clear that their listening abilities exceeded their reading abilities. This finding reinforces the idea that people's auditory comprehension abilities exceed their visual reading proficiency. This suggests that the most notable improvement in skills occurs in the domain of auditory perception, accomplished by utilising video games for informal acquisition of the English language.

Seli and Santosa (2022) examined how video games affect English learning. This study shows that reading and listening are better than speaking and writing. Our study confirmed previous findings that reading and listening skills improved. According to Seli and Santosa (2022), our study found that speaking and writing skills increased less than reading and listening skills.

According to Rudis & Poštić (2018), most video games contain textual and auditory information to help users expand their vocabulary. Our research findings support the notion that incorporating both written and auditory elements in these games significantly improves reading and listening abilities, while having less impact on speaking and writing skills. It is important to mention that certain types of games, such as online games that require teammates to communicate, are more successful in enhancing speaking and writing skills.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

In order to examine the influence of video games on our English language skills as non-native speakers, we conducted several data collection sessions for this research. Multiple studies have shown that video games have an influence on our proficiency in the English language as a second language. Video games have a direct impact on the acquisition of vocabulary, motivation, and overall proficiency in the English language.

The acquisition of vocabulary in video games is influenced by the extensive interactions of gamers with unfamiliar words, thus providing students with the opportunity to explore and improve their understanding of new vocabulary. Video games have a positive impact on language acquisition due to the inclusion of literary elements within them.

Video games also greatly enhance learning motivation because of their enjoyable nature. Participating in play activities indirectly improves your English language skills. This approach deviates substantially from conventional learning methods. A significant number of students

encounter tedium while engaging in book-based studying. Using video games to improve English skills may provide a more efficient learning approach. At present, it is not practical to use it as the main method for educational instruction in the classroom. Nevertheless, there is a potential for its utilization in the future.

The initial findings suggested that video games improved four distinct English language skills. Both participants exhibited improved proficiency in their English language skills as a direct result of regularly playing video games. Their reading and listening skills exhibited the most significant improvements.

In order to optimize the efficacy of video games in language acquisition, several recommendations emerge. Teachers should consider adding video games to English classes. Video games are engaging and interactive, which can motivate students to learn English better than traditional methods. Educators should help develop technology to improve students' English learning experience. Teachers can use video games to create simple English-learning games that reward students. Early engagement in learning is the goal of this approach. Teachers should also ask about the previous day's game and whether new vocabulary was learned. This will improve students' video game learning.

Students are advised to explore and use video games independently in informal English learning. Students are encouraged to play single-player computer games with extensive conversation, a compelling storyline, character interactions, and other elements that can help them expand their vocabulary. Online games with a global server can improve students' English and communication skills. Students must be eager to learn new words and vocabulary to learn English through video games. Video game language acquisition requires vocabulary expansion.

Given this study's limitations, which only examined written structures and expressions, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension while ignoring participants' speaking comprehension, we suggest that future research should cover all four language skills. A pre- and post-test before and after informal English language learning through video games can achieve this. Another limitation of this study is the lack of a game to assess the impact of a video game on participants' English language proficiency. Games that improve English language proficiency should be studied next. Analyzing these games requires quantitative research.

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